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OLD MAIDS.

I love old maids and allers did,
And hate the folks as snarl about 'em,
And know this strange old story o' ours
Could never get along without 'em
I've loved 'em ever since I knowed
That they was wimmin as others,
Who marry only for a home,
And bear the name o' wives and mothers.
Dot, marry knowl they're just as good,
And they disare as much o' honor
As she who breaks her neck ter get
The yoke o' marriage put upon her.
But some folks could'n live nor die,
If 'twasn't for pickin' and for quar'lin',
And so old maids are made ter take
A certain share of all their snarlin'.
And bachelors—poor fellows, too!
They ketch it sharp as Greenland winters,
From folks whose souls and tempers are
Made mostly up o' thorns and splinters.
But I would jist be pleased to know
If they ain't free ter do their choosin';
Ter marry, or ter marry not
Jist as they think it gain or loosin'.
If they have loved and they have lost,
And there are graves beneath the daisies,
Their grief deserves our sympathy,
Their contrary deserves our praise.

THE BLACK TULIP.

BY ALEXANDRE DUMAS.
Author of the "Count of Monte Cristo,"
"The Three Musketeers," "The Twenty
Years After," "The Vicomte de Bragelonne,"
"The Son of Athos," "The Iron
Mask," "The Iron Duke," etc., etc.

CHAPTER VI.

THE HATRED OF A TULIP-FANCIER.

From that moment Boxtel's interest in
tulips was no longer a stimulus to his ex-
ertions, but a deadening anxiety. Hence-
forth all his thoughts ran only upon the
fury which his neighbor would cause him,
and thus his favorite occupation
was changed into a constant source of
misery to him.

Van Baerle, as may be easily imagined,
had no sooner begun to apply his natural
ingenuity to his new fancy, than he suc-
ceeded in growing the finest tulips. In-
deed he knew better than any one else at
Haarlem or Leyden—the two towns
which boast the best soil and the most
congenial climate—how to vary the col-
ors, to modify the shape, and to produce
new species.

Mytheer Van Baerle and his tulips,
therefore, were in the month of every-
body; so much so, that Boxtel's name
disappeared for ever from the list of the
notable tulip-growers in Holland, and
those of Dort are now represented by
Cornelius and Van Baerle, the modest
and inoffensive avant.

Engaging heart and soul, in his pur-
suits of sowing, planting and gathering.
Van Baerle, caressed by the whole
fraternity of tulip-growers of Europe, enter-
tained not the least suspicion that there
was at his very door a pretender whose
throne he had usurped.

He went on his career, and consequen-
tially in his triumphs; and, in the course of
two years, he covered his borders with
such marvellous productions, as no mortal
man, following in the tracks of the
Creator, except, perhaps, Shakespeare
and Rubens, have equalled in point of
numbers.

And also, if Dante had wished for a
new type to be added to his characters of
the Inferno, he might have chosen Boxtel
during the period of Van Baerle's suc-
cesses. Whilst Cornelius was weeding,
manuring, watering his beds; whilst,
kneeling on the turf-border, he analyzed
every vein of the flowering tulips, and
meditated on the modifications which
might be effected by crosses of color or
otherwise,—Boxtel, concealed behind a
small sycamore which he had trained at
the top of the partition-wall in the shape
of a fan, watched, with his eyes starting
from their sockets, and with foaming
mouth, every step and every gesture of
his neighbor; and, whenever he thought
he saw him look happy, or described a
smile on his lips, or a flash of content-
ment glistening in his eyes, he poured out
towards him such a volley of maledic-
tion and furious threats, as to make it in-
deed a matter of wonder, that this veno-
mous breath of envy and hatred did not
carry a blight on the innocent flowers
which had excited it.

When the evil spirit has once taken
hold of the heart of a man, it urges him
on without letting him stop. Thus Box-
tel was soon no longer content with see-
ing Van Baerle. He wanted to see his
flowers too; he had the feelings of an ar-
tist; the master-piece of a rival engrossed
his interest.

He therefore bought a telescope, which
enabled him to watch, as accurately as
did the owner himself, every
progressive development of the flower,
from the moment when, in the first year,
its pale and seed leaf begins to peep from
the ground, to that glorious one when,
after five years, its petals at last reveal
the hidden treasures of its chalice. How
often had the miserable jealous man to
observe, in Van Baerle's beds, tulips
which dazzled him by their beauty and
almost choked him by their profusion.

And then, after the first blush of the
admiration which he could not help feel-
ing, he began to be tortured by the pangs
of envy, by that slow fever which creeps

over the heart and changes it into a nest
of vipers, each devouring the other and
ever born anew. How often did Boxtel,
in the midst of tortures which no pen is
able fully to describe—how often did he
feel an inclination to jump down into the
garden, during the night, to destroy the
plants, to tear the bulbs with his teeth,
and to sacrifice to his wrath the owner
himself, if he should venture to stand up
for the defence of his tulips.

But to kill a tulip was a horrible crime
in the eyes of a genuine tulip-fancier; as
to killing a man, it would not have mat-
tered so very much.
Yet Van Baerle made such progress in
the noble science of growing tulips, which
he seemed to master with the true in-
stinct of genius, that Boxtel was at last
maddened to such a degree as to think of
throwing sticks and stones into the flower
stands of his neighbor. But remembering
that he would be sure to be found out,
and that he would not only be pun-
ished by law, but also dishonored for
ever in the face of all the tulip-growers of
Europe, he had recourse to stratagem;
and, to gratify his hatred, tried to devise
a plan by means of which he might gain
his ends without being compromised himself.

He considered a long time, and at last
his meditations were crowned with suc-
cess.

One evening he tied two cats together
by their hind-legs with a string about
six feet in length, and threw them from
the wall into the midst of that noble, that
princely, that royal bed, which contained
not only the "Cornelius De Witte," but
besides, the "Beauty of Brabant," milk-
white, edged with purple and pink; the
"Marble of Rotterdam," color of flax,
blossoms, feathered red and flesh-color;
and the "Wonder of Haarlem," dark
dove-color, tinged with a lighter shade of
the same.

The frightened cats, having alighted on
the ground, first tried to fly each in a di-
ferent direction, until the string by which
they were tied together was tightly
stretched across the bed; then, however,
feeling that they were not able to get off,
they began to pull to and fro, and, to
wheel about with heart-rending caterwaul-
ings, moving down with their string the
flowers among which they were disport-
ing themselves, until, after a furious strife
of about a quarter of an hour, the string
broke and the combatants vanished.

Boxtel, hidden behind his sycamore,
could not see anything, as it was pitch
dark; but the piercing cries of the cats
told the whole tale, and his heart, over-
flowing with gall, was now throbbing with
triumphant joy.

Boxtel was no longer to ascertain the ex-
tent of the injury, that he remained on
his post until morning to feast his eyes at
the state in which the two cats had
placed the flower-beds of his neighbor.
The mist of the morning chilled his
frame, but he did not feel the cold of the
hope of revenge keeping his blood at fever
heat. The chagrin of his rival was to
pay for all the inconvenience which he
incurred himself.

At the earliest dawn the door of the
white house opened, and Van Baerle
made his appearance; approaching the
flower-beds with a smile of a man who
had passed the night comfortably in his
bed, and had had happy dreams.

All at once he perceived furrows and
little mounds of earth on the beds which
only the evening before had been as
smooth as a mirror; all at once he per-
ceived the symmetrical rows of his tulips
to be completely disordered, like the pikes
of a battalion in the midst of which a
shell has fallen.

He ran up to them with blanched
cheeks.

Boxtel trembled with joy. Fifteen or
twenty tulips, torn and crushed, were
lying about, some of them bent, others
completely broken and already withering;
the sap oozing from their bleeding bulbs;
how gladly would Van Baerle redeemed
that precious sap with his own blood!

But what was his surprise and his de-
light! what was the disappointment of
his rival! Not one of the four tulips
which the latter had meant to destroy
was injured at all. They raised proudly
their noble heads above the corpses of
their slain companions. This was enough
to console Van Baerle, and enough to fan
the rage of the horticultural murderer,
who tore his hair at the sight of the effect
of the crime which had been committed
in vain.

Van Baerle could not imagine the
cause of the mishap, which, fortunately,
was of far less consequence than it might
have been. On making inquiries, he
learned that the whole night had been
disturbed by terrible caterwaulings. He,
besides, found traces of the cats, their
footmarks and hairs left behind on the
battle-field; to guard, therefore, in future
against a similar outrage, he gave orders
that henceforth one of the under-garden-
ers should sleep in the garden in a sentry
box near the flower beds.

Boxtel heard him give the order, and
saw the sentry-box put up that very day;
but he deemed himself lucky in not hav-
ing been suspected, and, being more than
ever incensed against the successful hor-
ticulturist, he resolved to abide his time.
Just then the Tulip Society of Haar-
lem offered a prize for the production of

the large black tulip without a spot of
color, a thing which had not yet been ac-
complished, and was considered impos-
sible, as at that time, there did not exist
a flower of that species approaching even
the dark nut-brown. It was, therefore,
generally said that the founders of the
prize might just as well have offered two
millions as a hundred thousand guilders,
since no one would be able to gain it.

The tulip growing world, however, was
thrown by it into a state of most active
commotion. Some fanciers caught
at the idea without believing it practica-
ble; but such is the power of imagination
among florists, that, although considering
the undertaking as certain to fail, all their
thoughts were engrossed by that grand
black tulip, which was looked upon as
chimerical as the black swan or the
white raven were reputed to be in those
days.

Van Baerle was one of the tulip grow-
ers who were struck with the idea; Boxtel
thought of it in a light of a speculation.
Van Baerle, as soon as the idea had once
taken root in his clear and ingenious
mind, began slowly the necessary sow-
ings and operations to reduce the tulips,
which he had grown already, from red to
brown, and from brown to dark brown.

By the next year he had obtained
flowers of a perfect nut-brown, and Boxtel
espied them in the border, whereas he
had himself, as yet, only succeeded in
producing the light brown.

Boxtel once more worsted by the su-
periority of his hated rival, was now
completely disgusted with tulip-growing,
and, being driven half mad, devoted
himself entirely to observations.

The house of his rival was quite open
to view: a garden exposed to the sun;
cabinets with glass walls, shelves, cup-
boards, boxes and ticketed pigeon-holes,
which could easily be surveyed by the
telescope. Boxtel allowed his bulbs to
rot in the pits, his seedlings to dry up in
their cases, and his tulips to wither in
the borders, and henceforward occupied
himself with nothing else but the doings
at Van Baerle's.

But the most curious part of the opera-
tions was not performed in the garden.
It might be one o'clock in the morning,
when Van Baerle went up to his labora-
tory, into the glazed cabinet whither
Boxtel's telescope had such an easy ac-
cess; and here as soon as the lamp illu-
minated the walls and windows, Boxtel
saw the inventive genius of his rival at work.

He beheld him sifting his seeds, and
soaking them in liquids which were des-
tined to modify or deepen their colors.
He knew what Cornelius meant, when,
beating certain grains, then moistening
them, then combining them with others
by a sort of grafting—a minute or mar-
vellously-delicate manipulation—he shut
up in darkness those which were expect-
ed to furnish the black color; expose to
the sun or to the lamp those which were
to produce red; and placed between the
endless reflections of two water-mirrors
those intended for white, the pure rep-
resentation of the limpid element.

This innocent magic, the fruit at the
same time of childlike musings and of
manly genius—this patient, untiring la-
bor, of which Boxtel knew himself to be
incapable—made him, gnawed as he was
with envy, centre all his life, all his
thoughts, and all his hopes, in his tele-
scope.

For, strange to say, the love and inter-
est for horticulture, had not deadened in
Isaac his fierce envy and thirst of re-
venge. Sometimes, whilst covering Van
Baerle with his telescope, he deluded
himself into a belief that he was leveling
a never-failing musket at him; and then
he would seek with his finger for the trig-
ger to fire the shot with which to have
killed his neighbor. But it is time that
we should connect with this epoch of the
operations of the one, and the espionage of
the other, the visit which Cornelius De
Witte came to pay to his native town.

[Continued next week.]

The Man with the Extremist.

The Detroit Free Press, has this good
one: He smiled broadly as he halted for
a moment in front of the City Hall. He
looked like a man who could palm off
almost anything on the public at 100 per
cent profit and yet leave each customer
in a grateful mood. He had a tin trunk
in his hand, and as he smiled down Lafay-
ette avenue the boys wondered whether
the trunk contained tax receipts or horse
liniment. The stranger halted in front
of a residence, his smile deepened, and
he mounted the steps and pulled the bell.
"Is the lady at home?" he inquired of
the girl who answered the bell.

The girl thought he was the census-
taker, and she seated him in the parlor
and called the lady of the house. When
the lady entered the stranger rose bowed
and said:

"Madam I have just arrived in this
town after a tour extending clear down
to Florida, and wherever I went I was
received with glad welcome."

"Did you wish to see my husband?"
she asked as he opened the tin trunk.
"No, madam: I deal directly with the
lady of the house in all cases. A woman
will appreciate the virtues of my exter-
minator and purchase a bottle where a
man would order me off the steps with-

out glancing at it."

"Your—your what?" she asked.
"Madam," he replied as he placed a
four-ounce phial of dark liquid on the
palm of his left hand, "madam, I desire
to call your attention to my Sunset Bed-
bug Extreminator. It has been tried at
home and abroad, and in no case has it
failed to—"

"What do you mean sir?" she deman-
ded, getting very red in the face.
"Leave the house instantly."

"Madam, I do not wish you to infer
from my—"

"I want you to leave this house!" she
shrieked.

"Madam allow me to explain my—"
"I will call the police!" she screamed
making for the door, and he hastily
locked his trunk and hurried out.

Gowing down the street about two
blocks he saw the lady of the house at
the parlor window, and instead of elim-
inating the steps he stood under the window
and politely said:

"Madam, I don't wish to even hint that
any of the bed-steads in your house are
inhabited by bed-bugs, but—"

"What! What's that?" she exclaimed.

"I said that I hadn't the remotest idea
that any of the bed-steads in your house
were infested by bed-bugs," he replied.

"Take yourself out of this yard!"
she shouted, snatching a tidy off the
back of a chair and brandishing it at
him.

"Reg'ardon, madam, but I should
like to call your—"

"Get out!" she screamed; "get out,
or I'll call the gardener!"

"I will get out, madam, but I wish
you understand—"

"J-a-w-n! J-a-w-n!" she shouted out
of a side window, but the exterminator
agent was out of the yard before
John could get around the house.

He seemed discouraged as he walked
down the street, but he had traveled
less than a block when he saw a stout
woman sitting on the front steps of a
fine residence, fanning herself.

"Stout women are always good-nat-
ured," he soliloquized as he opened
the gate.

"Haven't got anything for the grass-
hopper sufferers?" she called out as he
entered.

There was an angelic smile on his
face as he approached the steps set his
trunk down and said:

"My mission, madam, is even nobler
than acting agent for a distressed
community. The grasshopper sufferers
do not comprise a one-hundredth part
of the world's population, while my
mission is to relieve the whole world.

"I don't want any peppermint
essence," she continued as he started to
unlock the trunk.

"Great heavens, madam, do I resem-
ble a peddler of cheap essences?" he ex-
claimed. "I am not one. I am here
in Detroit to enhance the comforts of
the night—to produce pleasant dreams.
Let me call your attention to my Sun-
set Bed-bug Extreminator, a liquid war-
ranted to—"

"Red what?" she screamed, ceasing to
fan her fat cheeks.

"My Sunset Bed-bug Extreminator.
It is to-day in use in the humble negro
cabins on the banks of the Arkansaw,
as well as in the royal palace of her
Majesty Q—"

"You rascal! villian!" she wheezed;
"how dare you insult me in—"

"No insult, madam, it is a pure mat-
ter of—"

"Leave! Git o-w-t!" she screamed,
clutching at his hair, and he had to go
out in such a hurry that he couldn't
lock the trunk until he reached the walk.

He traveled several blocks and turned
several corners before he halted again,
and his smile faded away to a melan-
choly grin. He saw two or three ragged
children at a gate noticed that the house
was old, and he braced up and entered.

"I vants no soap," said the woman
of the house as he stood in the door.

"Soap, madam, soap? I have no
soap. I noticed that you lived in an
old house, and as old houses are pretty
apt to be infested—"

"I vants no bins or needles to-day!"
she shouted.

"Madam, I am not a peddler of Yan-
kee notions," he replied. "I am sell-
ing a liquid, prepared only by myself
which is warranted to—"

"I vants no baper gollers!" she ex-
claimed, motioning him to leave.

"Paper collar! I have often been
mistaken for Shakespeare, madam, but
never before for a paper collar peddler.
Let me unlock my trunk and show—"

"I vants no matches—no do-bacco—
no cigars!" she interrupted; and her
husband came around the corner and,
after eyeing the agent for a moment
remarked:

"If you don't be quick out of here
I shall haf no shokings apout it!"

At dusk that night the agent was
sitting on a salt barrel in front of a
commission house, and the shadows of
evening were slowly deepening the
melancholy look on his face.

It takes only one letter to make Mary
marry.

Have a Purpose in Life.

Young man, have you a purpose in life?
What do you intend to be or do? The
question strikes you, perhaps, with some-
thing of novelty. Yet it is the great one
on which your future place in the world
depends. If no life purpose is yet formed
in your mind, it is full time that you sit
down and spend a season in grave reflec-
tion. Without an earnest purpose, noth-
ing worth accomplishing can be done in
this world. Thought, will, energy, work
—these are the elements of success—these
are the materials out of which men con-
struct their fortunes; and if you are
dreaming of wealth, honor or position in
the future, and have not these to build on
and build with, advancing years will see
the beautiful structure that now rises
pleasantly in your fancy fading away like
the "baseless fabric of a vision."

A young man inquired of Daniel Web-
ster if there were room in the legal pro-
fession. "Yes," replied the statesman,
"plenty of room in the upper stories."
And so, in the several callings, trades
and professions, there is plenty of room
in the upper stories. But only few have
the energy to climb up and occupy them.
All honor to the few!

We hear daily the complaint, that all
professions and all branches of industry
are crowded. And so they are, with the
simless and mediocre. But there is plenty
of room in all of them—in the upper
stories—where scope enough for live
men, with talent, earnestness and will.
Unhappily the larger number of our
young men are wasting their leisure hours
in sensual indulgence or pleasure-seek-
ing. We find them nightly at the thea-
ter, opera, or the ball, or in the com-
pany of idle men or frivolous women, con-
tent if they can reach the dignity of an
operatic criticism, or talk learnedly of
the reading and acting of some favorite
wearer of the sock and buskin. A poor
and mean ambition this; no wonder the
intellect is dwarfed that has in it no bet-
ter aspiration.

A few years will pass, and then we may
look for the great company of these sim-
less ones, but look in vain. Their mark
will be seen somewhere upon society,
their names be heard when the world's
benefactors are spoken of. Are you con-
tent, young man, to be numbered with
them? If not, gird up your loins, and in
good earnest seek to acquire the utmost
ability in your art, calling or profession.
Let each day see you advancing in skill
and knowledge; and as certain as the sun
shines or the water runs, you will rise
above the common mass. And just in
the degree that your motives are hono-
rable and unselfish, will you add happi-
ness to success in life.

Waiting for a Cave.

(Vicksburg Herald.)
Three or four days ago, within two or
three miles of this city, a Washington
street merchant, who had business in the
country, came to a small creek beside
which a native was washing his shirt.
The man was sousing the garment up
and down and around, and as he "soused"
he whistled a merry tune.

"Do you have to wash your own
shirt?" inquired the merchant, as he hal-
ted.

"Not allus, but old Bet has got one o'
her flis' on jest now," was the ready re-
ply.

"Then you don't agree very well?"
"Purty well on the general thing,
Bet's kind o' mulish, and I'm kind o'
mulish, and when we get our backs o'
we crawl off to see who'll cave first."

"I should think you would want some
soap."

"I do."

"Why don't you get it, then?"

"That would be caving to Bet, stran-
ger. She's squatted on the only bit of
bar soap 'twen here and Vicksburg, and
she's jest aching for me to alide up and
ask her for it."

"And you won't?"

"Stranger," replied the native as he
straightened up, "don't I look like a fel-
ler that would wear a shirt three months
 afore I'd cave in and holler for soap?"

The merchant sided with him, and as
he drove on, the man soused the shirt up
and down and whistled:

"I'm gwine up the river—
Hear me holler."

Time.

It waits for no man; it travels onward
with an even, uninterrupted, inexorable
step, without accommodating itself to the
delays of mortals. The restless hours
pursue their course; moments press after
moments; day trends upon day; year
rolls after year. Does man loiter, pro-
crastinate? Let the listless or insolent? Be-
hold the days, and months, and years,
unmindful of his delay, are never slug-
gish, but march forward in silent and
solemn procession. Our labors and toils,
our ideas and feelings, may be suspended
by sleep; darkness, and silence, and death
may reign around us, but Time is beyond
the power of any human being, besides
Omnipotence. The clock may cease to
strike; the sun to shine; but the busy
hours pass on. The months and years
must continue to move forward.

When freedom from her mountain
height unfurled her standard to the air,
her skirts, pinned back so very tight,
made her appear exceedingly spare.

Capital.

Some men accumulate by loaning mon-
ey on bond and mortgage. They care
not and will not invest a dollar in private
or public enterprise. Bond and mortgage
will give them a certain return for their
money, notwithstanding the vicissitude of
trade, the drought of summer, and the
pinchings of winter. The farmer, the
mechanic, and all who have substantial
property to pledge at about one half its
worth must pay them tribute. They run
no risk, and do nothing towards giving
employment to labor, or aiding those who
depend upon labor for subsistence. There
are many towns, for their prosperity, who
have quite too many who would wring
their victims to penury for the use of
their money. In a town not many miles
from my own, are several business men
who, apparently, never learned the secret
of making money through the instrumen-
tality of bonds and mortgages. Industry
and good management gave them capital.
That capital was invested in business,
and that business gave employment to
hundreds whose only support was labor.
Not many years ago, an Irishman started,
in the town of Kinderhook, a small iron
foundry. He made money. As he accu-
mulated, he extended business, and now
he is engaged, not only in the foundry
business, but has large investments in
cotton manufacturing and mercantile pur-
suits. He is emphatically a useful man,
for his means benefit all around him.
Though he makes money, commands and
has it on hand, he knows nothing about
loaning it upon bond and mortgage. He
uses it in business pursuits—builds facto-
ries, houses, and opens stores. One such
man is worth a dozen of your money-
lending sharks in any community. The
farmer and the mechanic are not vassals
to him for the use of his money, because
he uses it himself. He runs the risk of
high and low prices. The employment
of his capital feeds a large number of
men, women and children, and at the
same time adds much to the prosperity
and wealth of every place in which his
investments are made.—Exchange.

Cheating an Innocent Old Man.

(Vicksburg Herald.)
One day last month when trade was
dull, a Vicksburg grocery clerk procured
a piece of sole-leather, from a shoema-
ker, painted it black, and laid it back for
further use. Within a few days an old
chap from back in the country came in
and enquired for a plug of chewing to-
bacco. The piece of sole leather was tied
up, paid for, and the purchaser started
for home. At the end of the sixth day he
returned, looking downcast and dejected,
and walking into the store he inquired
of the clerk:

"Member that terbacker I got here the
other day?"

"Yes."

"Well, was that a new brand?"

"No—same old brand."

"Regular plug terbacker, was it?"

"Yes."

"Well, then, it's me; it's right here in
my jaws," sadly replied the man, "I
knewed I was gettin' purty old, but I was
allus handy on bitten plug. I never seen a
plug afore this that I couldn't tear to pieces
at one chaw. I sot my teeth on to this
one, and bit and pulled and twisted like
a dog at a root, and I've kept bitten and
pullen for six days, and thar she am now,
the same as the day you sold her to me."

"Seemed to be good plug," remarked the
clerk as he smelled the counterfeiter.

"She's all right; it's me that's failin';"
exclaimed the old man. Put me out
some fine-cut, and I'll go home and deed
the farm to the boys, and git ready for
the grave!"